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Governor Doyle Details Ongoing State Efforts to Help Victims of Hurricane Katrina

Wisconsin's Emergency Operations Center Activated to Coordinate Response

Governor Jim Doyle today called on all citizens of Wisconsin to continue donating to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort and detailed ongoing state efforts to help the victims.

"Wisconsin individuals, families, civic organizations, and businesses are continuing to contact us and offer assistance to those people affected by Hurricane Katrina," Governor Doyle said. "The outpouring of generosity here shows Wisconsin's true spirit and we will keep working to make sure we can offer whatever help is needed as quickly as possible."

Wisconsin's Emergency Operations Center in Madison was activated today to coordinate the response by state agencies though much of the relief effort, should evacuees arrive in Wisconsin, will be coordinated by the Red Cross and by the local county governments where evacuees are located.

EOC Contact Information: Public Information Officers are available to answer media questions at **608-242-3294**.

The State has taken the following steps:

- Governor Doyle today signed Executive Order #120, ordering that flags shall be flown at half-staff at all buildings, grounds, and military installations of the State of Wisconsin to honor the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The EO is effective immediately and ends at sunset on Tuesday, September 20, 2005. Read a copy of Governor Doyle's Executive Order: <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=4214&locid=19>.
- The State has offered to accept up to 1,150 evacuees from affected areas, and is awaiting word from FEMA on the offer. FEMA has indicated that evacuees could arrive with as little as 12 hours notice, so the state is coordinating with the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other relief organizations to make preparations for possible evacuees. Governor Doyle announced the State is making available the entire Youth Center at State Fair Park, with beds for more than 900 evacuees. There is room for an additional 200 evacuees at the South Milwaukee Community Center. In total, more than 1,150 individuals will be able to stay for up to three months or longer. Evacuees will receive appropriate medical care, children will be able to enroll in local schools, and families will have access to due benefits. Governor Doyle also directed Wisconsin Emergency Management to utilize the same temporary housing model in other communities across the state. Citizens interested in donating to these efforts should contact the Red Cross in Milwaukee at 414-342-8680.

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- Through Wisconsin Emergency Management, Governor Doyle has helped to coordinate efforts for those wishing to send transportation assistance to areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and has helped to coordinate Wisconsin first responder volunteers in those same areas.
- Governor Doyle and the University of Wisconsin announced that Badger football fans could make monetary donations for people affected by Hurricane Katrina to the American Red Cross at Camp Randall Stadium before the season-opener against Bowling Green on Saturday, September 3, 2005. That effort raised \$59,478 for American Red Cross hurricane relief efforts.
- Governor Doyle has directed Wisconsin's University System to open several of its campuses to welcome students enrolled in colleges or universities that are closed because of damage from the hurricane.
- Governor Doyle has directed state agencies to coordinate Wisconsin's response with the American Red Cross, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and local governments to prepare for evacuees the state receives.
- Governor Doyle authorized permanent State employees who are certified Red Cross disaster relief volunteers to be granted a paid leave of absence at the written request of the Red Cross for up to 30 days.
- Governor Doyle issued an Executive Order that lifts Wisconsin highway weight restrictions on commercial motor vehicles for 30 days so that more trucks can deliver vital goods and equipment to Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.
- Governor Doyle has deployed more than 500 Wisconsin National Guard soldiers and airmen, along with five helicopters and several five-ton utility vehicles, to affected areas in Louisiana and Mississippi.
- On August 31, 2005, Governor Doyle signed Executive Order #117 proclaiming that a State of Emergency exists in Mississippi and Louisiana as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Governor Doyle also said that State efforts include the following:

Department of Revenue

The Department of Revenue will not impose a penalty on retailers or consumers for dyed diesel fuel sold from September 1 through September 15, 2005, even though that fuel is used for highway travel. However, retailers and consumers of dyed diesel fuel are subject to the Wisconsin motor vehicle fuel excise tax on dyed diesel fuel sold for use on highways. The federal Internal Revenue Service, in response to shortages of clear diesel fuel caused by Hurricane Katrina, announced late last week it would suspend any penalties associated with using dyed diesel fuel on the nation's highways.

Department of Regulation and Licensing

The Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board has issued a patient care alert regarding emergency dispensing protocols to insure the continuation of patient care for persons relocating to Wisconsin from the Gulf States affected by Hurricane Katrina. The patient's doctor's office and pharmacy may be destroyed or damaged, and/or records or communications otherwise are unavailable at the current time. Affected citizens relocating from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, or Florida, may refill their prescriptions with as little as a prescription bottle with a label and it is up to individual pharmacists to determine if a label is valid.

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Department of Public Instruction

On Friday, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster sent Wisconsin district administrators a letter encouraging them to welcome with open arms the new students affected by Hurricane Katrina in an effort to bring relief and stability into the lives of so many displaced young people.

DPI is also working with local school district administrators and other community members to provide technical support as the new students arrive from areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

In addition, the State is doing the following:

- First responders can register on the Wisconsin Emergency Management website – http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov/registration_intro.asp – for Emergency Management Assistance Compact deployment in support of the Hurricane Katrina response and recovery.
- To provide expertise as needed and when requested by Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, the Health Alert Network is communicating with health care professionals to update their listings in Wisconsin's Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR) – a registry of more than 1,100 health care volunteers.
- The Department of Health and Family Services is working to ensure that health care providers and public health departments are prepared to provide adequate care to refugees by providing guidance through the Health Alert Network, including bulletins from the Centers for Disease Control.
- The Department of Workforce Development stands ready to send workers to Louisiana and Mississippi and their Unemployment Agencies to process unemployment claims if assistance is required. Disaster unemployment claims could reach one million.

A complete list of contact information for relief organizations is available on Governor Doyle's website at: <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/section.asp?linkid=526&locid=19>.